

# From Static Space to Dynamic Architecture: The Changing Principles of Contemporary European Church Architecture

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## Abstract

*The issue of ressourcement has been fully re-evaluated thanks to the new liturgical guidelines of the third millennium. Instead of utopias, new architectural solutions have emerged which suit liturgy's structure better, and depict a more understandable and realistic image of Christianity. This contemporary change has had an impact on large scale planning as well, especially where new city centres are formed as open and multifunctional meeting places for various communities. Most examples in Europe prove that the architectural framework of such religious orientation inevitably gives rise to new social platforms within urban environments.*

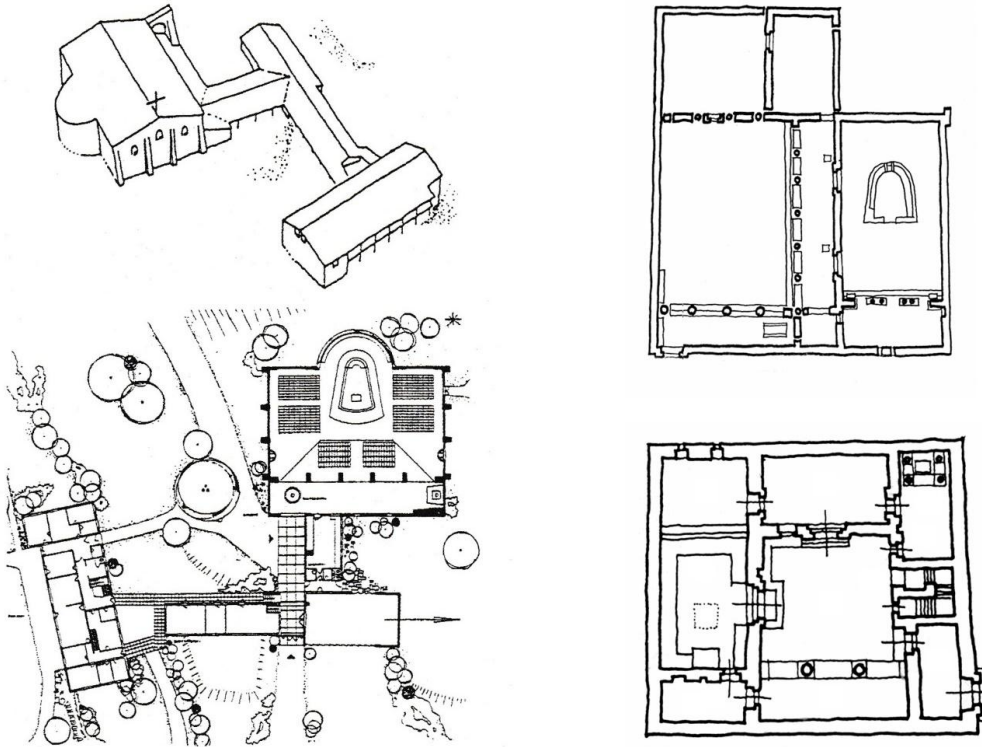


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**Figure 1 Left: Emil Steffann and Heinrich Kahlefeld, St. Lawrence's Church, Munich, Germany (er. 1955). Axonometric view and site plan. Right: Christian house churches of Qirkbize (4th century), and Dura-Europos, Syria (3rd century). Ground plans.**



## The early paradigm

Monastic orders and liturgical movements initiating reforms for the modern Catholic Church were usually inspired by the worship and lifestyle of the primeval Christian communities. This inspiration continued to live on after the Second Vatican Council; thus the spatial and urban heritage of the early centuries have been shaping the course of European church architecture up to the present. Monasteries mostly defined the message of the Council to mean that the laity should be involved in the religious praxis and regulations of their own traditions, while other scholars of the *ressourcement* (defined by French poet and Catholic essayist Charles Péguy (cited in Healy, 2011: 56) as a movement “from a less perfect tradition to a more perfect tradition, a call from a shallower tradition to a deeper tradition, an overtaking of depth, an investigation into deeper sources, a return to the source in the literal sense”) considered that the liturgical reform was leading the Church back to Apostolic times. The result was the tendency for houses of God to become similar to the classical house churches in their spatial arrangement and architectural character.

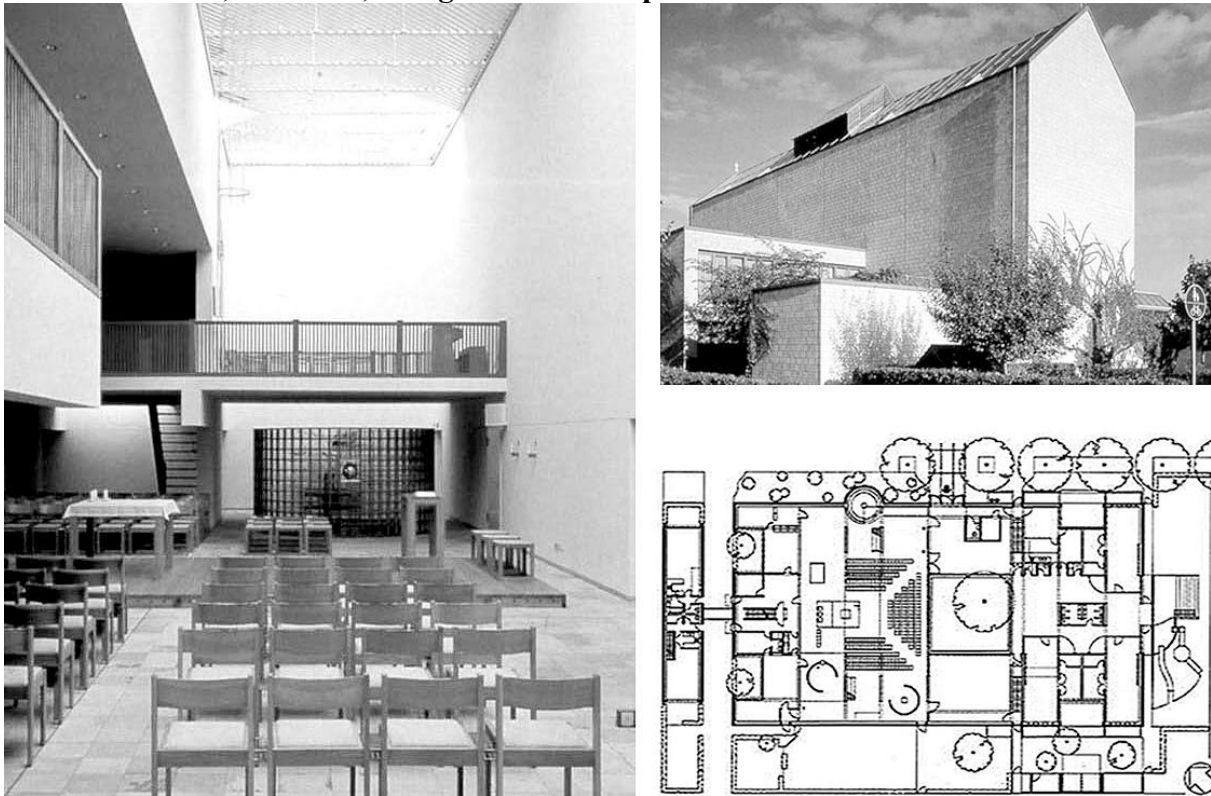
The Second Vatican Council (1963: 124), emphasizing the role of the congregation in both church service and community life, gave the architects a brief inspiration for future buildings:

“And when churches are to be built, let great care be taken that they be suitable for the celebration of liturgical services and for the active participation of the faithful.”

Shortly after the promulgation of the Council’s liturgical constitution, this single statement was interpreted as a promotion of *versus populum*, a new orientation towards the community. Beyond their better acoustic or visibility features, central spaces were considered the best geometry to symbolize an ecclesia where those seated around the “table of the Lord” may witness the “mystery”. ‘Activity’ was defined afterwards as equal partaking in the communion, the same way the Apostles were supposed to have surrounded their Master during His last supper. This idea, though based on the misunderstanding that the Christian mass originates exclusively from that supper (Pius XII, 1947: 114 /AAS.563), became very popular by the time of the Council. Thus it helps to understand how the idea of house churches, the apostolic community and the concept of central space were connected, and how they gave rise to a new architectural model of liturgical buildings. The new type, of course, was not privileged by the Catholic Church officially, since it was only one of the possible understandings of the Council’s exhortations, but we can admit that, without the synod’s implicit permission, it could not have come into general use.

The important examples of pre-Council churches familiar with the principles of the *ressourcement* are mostly from early 20<sup>th</sup> century Germany. These were either the products of the liturgical experiments performed respectably by Rudolf Schwarz and Romano Guardini, or spatial ‘declarations’ competing with some impelling Protestant designs, such as Dominikus Böhm’s Messopferkirche or the Sternkirche of Otto Bartning, both introduced in 1922. Bartning’s fan-shaped Gustav Adolf Church in Berlin (erected 1932-34) illustrates that spatial centralization and participation had been topical issues outside the Catholic Church as well, decades before her historical Council (Schnell, 1974: 39, 45, 58, 59).

**Figure 2 Ottokar Uhl, St. Jude Thaddeus' Church, Karlsruhe, Germany (er. 1979-89). Church interior, east view, and ground floor's plan.**



The third influence behind the conceptual reform of liturgical space originated from Johannes van Acken's (1922) program on ecclesial architecture, proposing a completely "Christ-centred" interior. His "Circumstantes", or encompassing model, positioning the assembly around the altar, was inspirational for later buildings, probably the most emblematic one being St. Lawrence's Church in Munich (er. 1955) [Figure 1]. The shared concept of Emil Steffann and Heinrich Kahlefeld sprang from the idea of Steffann's former rural barn-chapel, erected 'illegally' during the Nazi occupation of Boust, France, in 1943; but the final result reflected better on the issue of centralism by applying horseshoe-geometry. The architects chose the shorter axis of the rectangular plan as the centre line, embraced the altar from three sides with two unfolded wings, and added a curvilinear 'choir' for the clergy in the apse. The latter seemingly adopted the choirs of the 4<sup>th</sup> century Syrian house churches typical of Qirkbize [Figure 1] or Sinhar (Lang, 2009: 75), yet reversed and put them in a modern context with the altar facing the community. Given these layers of interpretation, the example of St. Lawrence Church has become one of the liturgical reform's frequently cited architectural paragons, spanning 20<sup>th</sup> century's pre- and post-Council periods.

The next generation of churches extended the *ressourcement*'s program by increasing community orientation. Irrespectively of the building's scale, places of worship following this model became both intimate and severe as a result of the desire for a new apostolic epoch for the modern Church. Some of them, though, had gone too far by minimizing the sacrificial symbolism of the liturgy into a mere biblical commemoration. Extreme examples of this tendency were Casa dello Studente's chapel in Pordenone, Italy, a plan of Glauco Gresleri and Silvano Vanier (er. 1972), as well as the barn-chapel in Rattenbach, Germany by Franz Xaver Lutz (Debuyst, 1997: photos V-VI), who accepted Aloys Goergen's guidelines (er. 1979-82) for placing Christian worship into a 'dining room' resembling the one in Jerusalem, where the Messiah collected the disciples before His final passion.

Other post-Council designs with the same conceptual origins were capable of visualizing the complexity of liturgy with more success; however, the altar's interpretation as a dining table or *mensa*, as much as the idealization of a utopic religious community, remained unquestionable. Ottokar Uhl's St. Jude Thaddeus' Church in Karlsruhe (er. 1979-89), for instance, was built as a part of a greater complex articulated like the first accommodations for Christian cult (cf. Zahner, 2009: 55-57). There is an atrium between the parish and the hall for celebrations, which rises over the rest of the building with its close-knit volume shaping a house. It slightly contrasts with an interior filled with a random composition of terraces and stairs. The unclad bearing structure, and the mobile furniture, draw an informal yet organic spatial frame around the liturgical act, whereas it is restricted to be performed on a highly conventional stage [*Figure 2*]. This discrepancy has been unnoticed in many other cases until the recent years, notwithstanding that the first post-Council plans having represented the same solution go back as far as 1971, e.g., to Erhard Fischer's St. Christopher's Church in Munich (Stock, 2004: 139). Much later, one could also seek out similar altar-stage compositions at St. Francis' Church in Steyr, Austria, by Peter and Gabriele Riepl (er. 2000-2001), the Spanish pilgrim church of Ignacio Vicens Hualde and José Antonio Ramos in Ponferrada (er. 2006-2010), or the earthquake-proof church of St. Paul the Apostle in Foligno, Italy, by Massimiliano and Doriana Fuksas (er. 2001-2009).

The above mentioned examples make it evident that the approach of *ressourcement* prevails in today's qualified church architecture, but has reached its upper programmatic limits. The reason for this is the hypothesis on the substance of the community, which is regarded as integrated, prepared and disciplined, although it is rarely the actual case. The other reason is



that the program renders a single spatial quality unto Christ-centrism, thus neglecting other historical solutions apart from the ones considered ‘authentic’ or ‘apostolic’. This has become even more problematic since the liturgical reconsiderations of Pope Benedict XVI (2007), and the current reinvention of the ‘spirit of the liturgy’ (Guardini, 1998; Ratzinger, 2000), which have made for new architectural interpretations of the liturgical reform.

**Figure 3** Andreas Meck, Dominikuszentrum, Munich, Germany (er. 2008). Aerial view and courtyard.



## A new generation

Dominikuszentrum (er. 2008) is a good example among them. The pastoral and social centre of Northern Munich [Figure 3] was developed as a multifunctional building with open volume and courtyard. On the side of the motorway passing the complex, its chapel rises over the composition like a tower imbued with diffuse light laterally from the north. Its walls are blue inside, thanks to several layers of glass membranes pasted to the bricks, which, even so, have kept their original colour and texture showing through the transparent coat. The walls, the floor and the ceiling are homogenous. On sunny days this cosy place distributes light equally to each segment of its unusual but calm atmosphere. Brick refers to both the local manufacture and the sheltering earth (Kaltenbach, 2009).

In-between the joints of the floor bricks, bronze crosses are shining upwards. Bronze contrasts with the dominant blue, and with it a mere alabaster niche at the chapel's corner, portraying the Mother of God, radiates warmth. Written in both German and Latin, words of the Apostles' Creed appear on the glazing of the high window; and in the centre, one can read the capitals: CREDO IN UNUM DEUM. The work of Andreas Horlitz complements the scripts burnt into the bricks of the building's eastern gate. We read the synonyms of Spirit (Geist) in almost every European and Middle-Eastern language. The multilingual message of the Pentecost addresses the suburb's immigrants from various parts of the world in a very personal way. The height of the liturgical space, which is of some account for its modest ground-space, relates to the invocation of the Holy Spirit (*epiclesis*) in anticipation of the Communion.

In accordance with the models of '*communio-space*' (Gerhards, *et al.*, 2003), the chapel, intended to be an artificial set for the invisible, has an empty core, and is furnished with lightly coloured pews in dialogical arrangement, as well as an ambo opposing the altar. The liturgical axis halves the longer sides of the rhombic ground plan; thus spatial depth is defined rather by the orthogonal axis. In the double focused nave, the ambo looks straight to the altar, so the central concept of the space and the liturgical axis do not conflict. The relatively small space, therefore, does not restrain the Introit procession or any other symbolic motions of the mass. This feature is significant mostly during celebrations of higher importance, when all the bronze gates are unfolded so that the liturgical space could gain an open air, but still covered,

porch. In this way, the chapel transforms into an apse of a spontaneously built outdoor church, while the pews behind the gates make a choir. By forming a slightly separated box with an orthogonal centreline, the very arrangement of the latter reminds one of the familiar articulation of Roman basilicas, such as the early medieval church of San Clemente (Barclay Lloyd, 1986: 213), or the monastic orders' most regular choir arrangements still used today. The unification of central and axial elements results in an essentially traditional structure of liturgical space. The threshold of widely open gates forms a symbolic choir screen (*lettner* or *jubé*) in this context. A light shaft cut across the foyer's fussy slab marks a foothold of space on the floor for the catechumens awaiting baptism. Dominikuszentrum seems to be suitable for a chapel as well as a traditionally articulated church welcoming the Roman Rite, restored by Pope Benedict XVI (2007) as 'extraordinary form', while its way of using building materials takes the path of the early Christian Church, combining outer simplicity with inner richness, colourfulness and heat.

The building complex with its close-knit geometry protects its courtyard from the outside world, yet is accessible from any direction. Numerous guests visit each day either directly through the courtyard, or one of the charity rooms surrounding it. The play of the openings and the changing height of the walls draw a rhythmic border for the new urban square. With its rather lifted stage, the square is distinguished, but still intimate through its elaborate boundary. The building's urban significance is considerable from this point, for it rises at the border of a motorway and a residential district as a buffer zone. Its tower rises up as a signpost for the platitudinous environment, not to make fun of the 'generic city' (Koolhaas, 1995), but to call for its regeneration. Designers have chosen the unostentatious way of assimilation, and put hardly noticeable bronze crosses into the joints all over the front and side façades. Those are the only signs that refer to its sacredness.

Dominikuszentrum's openness for both tradition and community has created a precise equilibrium, which is reflected by the versatility of its conventional brick architecture. Brick's interrelations with Christianity come on one hand from Rome's early pilgrim churches having applied this material quite often (Barclay Lloyd, 1986), and on the other hand from the evangelic symbol of the community building itself up in Christ (Eph 2:20-22); although the latter would rather relate to stone, which is cut individually. In spite of its puritanism, brick may create a friendly and vivid atmosphere – little wonder it has been so popular in the church architecture of both Western and Central Europe during modern industrialization, that



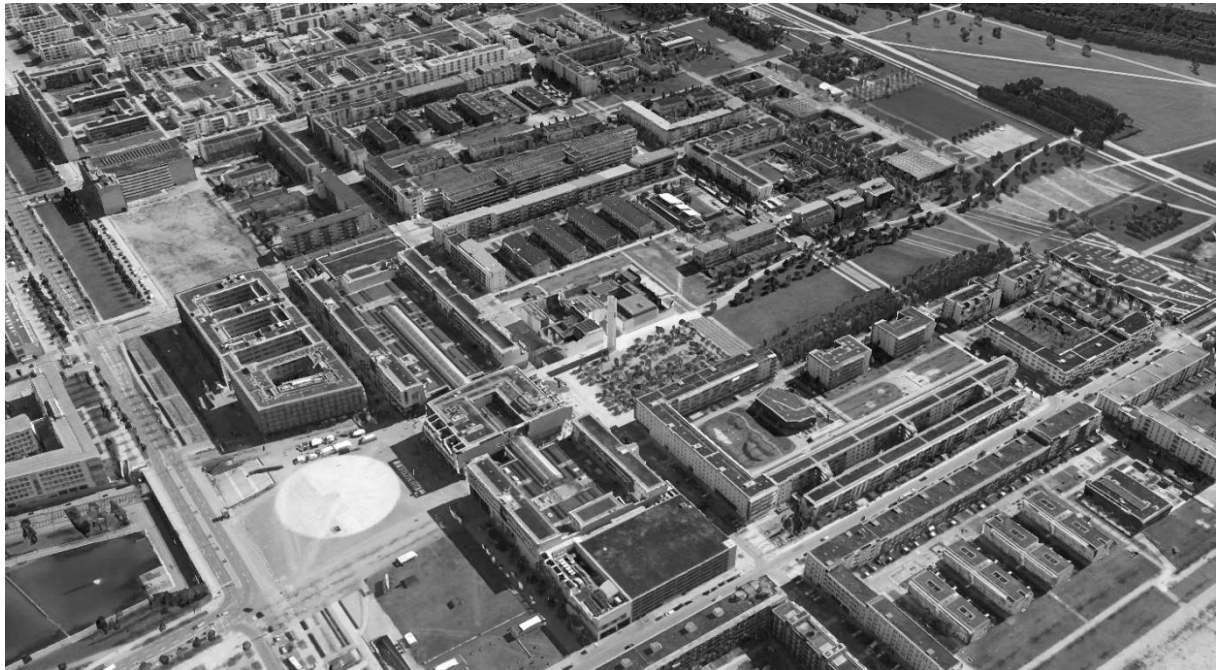
today it is considered traditional. The immediate predecessor of 'brick modernism' was one of the streams of late romanticism, somewhat Neo-Gothic in taste, which afforded advantages in the field of brick and concrete architecture. In Germany, the concept of Schinkel's Friedrichswerder Church (er. 1824-30) went through a brakeless transformation to prepare St. Heinrich's Church in Bamberg (er. 1927-29), a masterpiece of Michael Kurz, and the peculiar modernity of Fritz Höger's Hohenzollerndamm Church in Berlin (er. 1931-32) later on (Schnell, 1974: 31-52, 63, 68 cf. Katona & Vukoszávlyev, 2012: 10-15 and Vukoszávlyev, 2014: 22-23, 26). The process was inseparable from the secular achievements of brick architecture, namely of Berlage, de Klerk and the Amsterdam School, Ragnar Östberg's Stockholm City Hall (er. 1911-23), Fritz Höger's Chilehaus in Hamburg (er. 1922-24), or other well-known designs of Hans Poelzig.

Brick, presupposing industrial infrastructure, has always attached to an architecture which requires high technical control. This building material is prefabricated and modulated according to the general, not the unique, however, it allows various ways of application. Although modern brick architecture is rather an expression of industrial culture commonly detached from specific places and histories, it can be considered as traditional manufacture as well, thus it is a crucial means of architectural critique. Manufacture differs from the standards of vernacular as well as technological architecture, but can claim the benefits of both: if the language of brick architecture is considered international, then the specific ways of bricklaying engender local dialects for this language. For the same reason, Dominikuszentrum counts as unique, and, in a seemingly contradictory way, is capable of compensating for missing originality by a deliberately general device. Furthermore, the brick complex is an expression of togetherness not only of the churchgoers, but intentionally of the surrounding suburban community as well.

The balance between uniqueness and community is, however, more than the beneficial effect of brick architecture. Dominikuszentrum features a model of an energetic Christian life with its composition of volumes, and spatial fabric as well. This approach predominates, though, rather on a theoretic level, because the project first formulated the purpose of community building. It reflected a social utopia, rather than local circumstances when the design got started, but the result is convincing. The multifunctional courtyard shared by a chapel, a kindergarten, rooms for social care, a house for spiritual retreat, apartments and offices, seems a more suitable place for the complexity of Christian life than a solitary church. This

multifunction establishment welcomes a broad spectrum of weekday and highlighted celebrations, and more importantly, focuses on everyday life over the religious praxis of a supposed 'elite' that uses the Church only occasionally. There are more examples of such initiatives, such as Andreas Meck's parish centre in Neuried (er. 2002-2008), the ecumenical church complex in Munich by Florian Nagler (er. 2001-2003) [Figure 4], or the parish centre designed by Mauro Galatino in Modena (er. 2000-2008).

**Figure 4 Florian Nagler, ecumenical centre, Munich, Germany (er. 2001-2003). Aerial view and church interior.**





The architectural dimension of liturgy requires a dynamic communion with the sacraments. It has an impact on the relation between churches and the community, that is, the liturgy and the believers' way of life. With the opening of its spatial borders, for instance, Dominikuszentrum's liturgy can extend to the courtyard. The Catholic church of Florian Nagler's ecumenical complex looks out on a courtyard as well. It is neither visually, nor physically, isolated from the everyday life taking place there. Even Munich's Herz Jesu Church by Allmann-Sattler-Wappner (er. 2000) makes a similar gesture with its front façade capable of unfolding entirely, though a covered place is hard to find in which to meet, converse or play before the church, if not the urban square encompassed by the surrounding buildings.

Not for its exemplary cultic space, but the intelligence of its spatial fabric, the Church of St. Pio of Pietrelcina in Rome (er. 2007-10) by Studio Anselmi (Marandola & Brancaloni, 2011), and, next to the Italian capital, the work of Sharon Yoshie Miura and Floriana Taddei in Casal Boccone (er. 2006-10) [Figure 5] deserve mention among the best examples. An earlier version of the latter, modelled for a different site, was exhibited during the 2002 Biennale of Venice titled *Next*. Although the original concept was essentially overwritten, the

designers were again interested in the possibilities of establishing a new city centre at the alternative location as well.

The new complex, rising at the intersection of two main roads of the settlement, makes an impression of a colourful, protected, but every-side-open building, and unambiguously claims a principal urban role for itself, with its bold bell tower rising up from the composition. A reductive abstraction of volumes, resulting in a display of different surfaces on the façades, imply a fully articulated interior. Grey and yellow fields alternating with stone are commensurably arranged to project the building's functional complexity onto the cladding. "A two-storey piazza is attached to the church, surrounded by service rooms: on the base level there is a community chamber, the main level includes a parochial wing, and the tutorial rooms with a great loggia, and finally, guest rooms are on the second floor. The richness of functional elements is held together by the generous architectural gesture of the atrium capable of housing open air masses." (Sanmicheli & Vukoszávlyev 2011: 49)

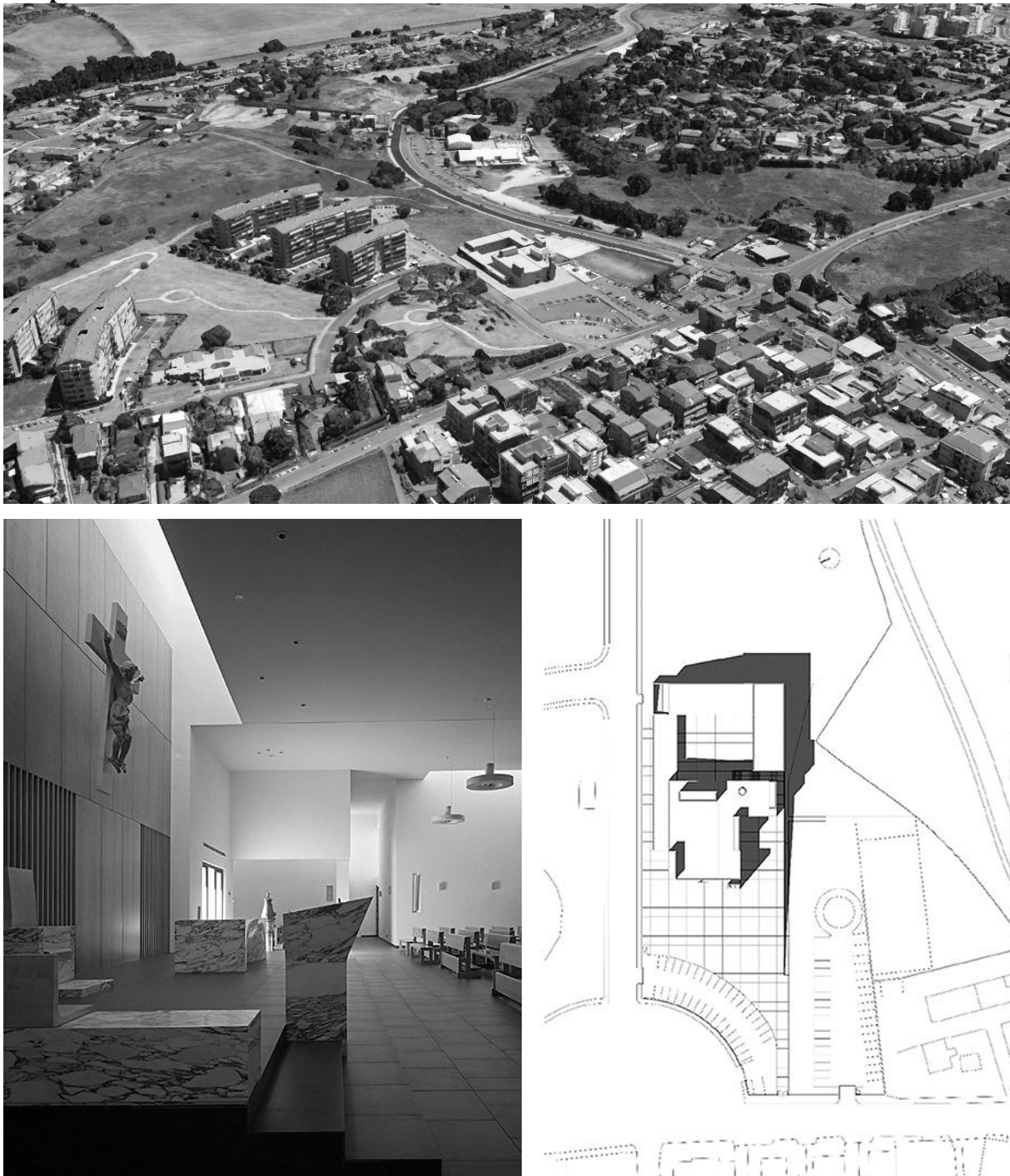
The liturgical space of the complex is full of lively dynamism as well, regarding the general lighting or the light shafts inserted to the clear-cut volume. Wherever needed, these shafts create accentuation points and lines across the space, e.g., at the sanctuary, the chapel tabernacle and the Stations of the Cross along the walls, and with the same effort, it softens the interior by the dissolution of sharp contrasts at the intersections. The same applies to the spatial organisation of the L-shaped building, as it consists of two characteristic parts, which are the place for communal celebration and the chapel for silent worship before the tabernacle. Between them there is a room for baptisms, a place looking out onto the courtyard. The church, regularly open at the front gates during Sunday masses, is accessible from the courtyard on weekdays. Whether for silent devotion or dynamic liturgy, the church is available for multiple religious purposes; moreover bible classes, dining, seminary or unbounded conversations are welcome next to the church in the same complex. Such presumes a healthy and diverse social life with the very appeal that used to be ascribed exclusively to the early Christian communities by modern theorists (Kocik, 2012: 106).

Multifarious uses are balanced with higher organization. Besides light, cladding and other furnishings make for certain accentuations within the liturgical space. The altar and the image of the Virgin, the Patron Saint of the church, are framed by more decorative surfaces standing out from a whitewashed background. The elements of the interior mirror the same hierarchy,

such as the Corchia marble block of the altar, the ambo, the sedilia, the baptismal font or the chapel's tabernacle, all appearing as homogenous but differently shaped volumes. The Lord's Table next to the tabernacle, regularly used on weekdays and during the Paschal Triduum, has merely its table-board made of the same marble, representing its subordinate status compared to the main altar (CDWDS, 1977: IV.7, 9). The rest of the table is made of light coloured maple, the same material as the believers' pews and the priestly seat. The 'community' of wood and marble stone appears as the symbolic conjunction of temporal human and eternal divine natures.

The differentiation between two types of sacred space resolves the conflict between the Eucharist's dynamic and static manifestations of presence, in spite of the interior's visual transparency. The unusual place for the baptistery wedged between the two spaces is reasonable for the technical detail, in that it represents the threshold before the congregation of confessors, as it is a waiting room for the church if we enter from the courtyard or the weekday chapel. Classrooms and guests' rooms as well as most of the commonly used spaces are joined to the sacred area from this direction. The example of St. Pio's Church shows that such a complex can provide both the rhythmic spatial articulation typical of directional-longitudinal churches and the community experience attributed to the central ones. The most important condition for that is the House of God should not be considered a perfect edifice, but a multifunctional building capable of accommodating both worship and various social activities. Thus, even longitudinal churches can escape from the uneasy, and at odd times unnatural, ties that suggest the public courtyard should continue the axis, extend the baptistery, fade into or be radically separated from the volume of the church – a solution by Paolo Zermani in Perugia, Italy (Bucci, 2008). A courtyard which is completely individual or joining from one side or another may as well work as a symbolic and functional foreground.

**Figure 5** Francesco Garofalo, Sharon Yoshie Miura & Floriana Taddei, St. Mary of Grace Parish, Casal Boccone, Rome, Italy (er. 2006-10). Aerial view, church interior and site plan



For the same reason that buildings similar to Casal Boccone's complex spread the message of the communion all over the grounds (cf. Benedict XVI, 2011), it is needless to highlight it again in the liturgical space or the liturgy itself (CDWDS, 1977: II.3). No wonder the master plan follows a well-tried longitudinal scheme, and not a central or 'dialogical' one. With the



traditional interpretation of sacred space, the sacrificial act at the core of the Catholic mass is not obscured by the community's so called "cultic immanentism" (Nichols, cited in Lang, 2009: 109). In our age of formal austerity and dispensing with ornamentation, it is as well worth taking into consideration that light and pure texture have an important role in emphasizing sacred presence or sacrifice. Liturgy's inner structure and, in a wider scope, the arrangement of functional units inside the building are mirrored in the use of different colours, surfaces and illumination. By the hierarchic systematization of these architectural means the church and chapel are understood as the 'head' of the complex (Vatican II, 1964: 4.15). Outside the Italian town, we know of good examples in Munich as well. The blue cladding of Dominikuszentrum's chapel interior, for instance, together with its 'lantern' extruded from the building's volume, makes for a simple but significant conveyance of images. In Florian Nagler's Catholic church, the same task is fulfilled by tinted windows which psychologically divide the side chapels from the place of the service.

### **The understanding of an opposition**

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, one of the most elaborate systems for the dynamic use of light, scale and patterns was apparently introduced by Le Corbusier. Ronchamp Chapel's colourful southern wall is still unexcelled. However, the alteration of even, gross, grey, and virtuous surfaces is not meant to be merely for art's sake. Neither is the contrast between the heterogeneous framework of the southern wall and the solitary window enhancing the sculpture of the Mother of God. The purpose of such architectural details is to differentiate the chapels from one another and from the ceremonial space; moreover, to divide the space into parts according to their functions and distances from the altar. Details accumulate to perform the general impression of a well-articulated yet plastic interior, which is both individually and socially remarkable, and picturesque as well as rationally conceivable. The dramatic spectrum of coloured light has been even further extended in the new millennium with the master's St. Peter's Church in Firminy (er. 1971-2006), completed by José Oubrerie (2009). Light there irradiates either concentrated or filtered: from cylindrical and prismatic tubes breaking through the transitional concrete mantle, and through screens which perforate the wall. Reflected light otherwise spotlights different areas of the inner space temporarily, although it does not follow the church's functional order better than the 'inertia' of artificial elements.

With his recent Jesuit university chapel in Seattle (er. 1994-97), Steven Holl followed an analogous path of stress and drama (Le Cuyer, 1997).

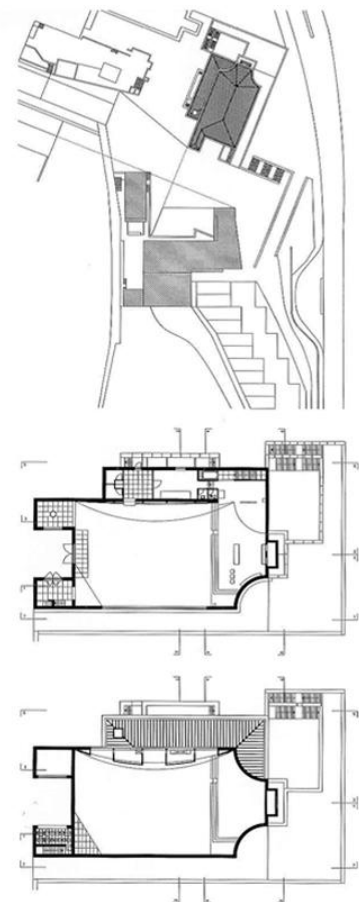
Such compositions are far from the architectural character of sacred spaces designed for secluded contemplation or silent prayer, as the former more likely fits to the ritual of the Lord's sacrifice and resurrection. We can oppose the chapel of Ronchamp's Poor Clare sisters and its southern wall with Álvaro Siza's church in Marco de Canaveses (er. 1990-2007) [Figure 6]. The latter's northwestern wall, and its curvature and thickness all seem similar, but its high lateral windows pour light down the inner coating differently from the ones of Notre-Dame-du-Haut: walls are blank, diffuse and temperate. Likewise, the ribbon window on the southeastern side is more practical than emotional, and much less the apse's translucent rifts could be dominant due to their orientation. Siza attempted to render a homogenous background for public prayer, and thus he subjected the church to the static experience of peacefulness. Only the baptistery makes an exception near the gates, but after the holy moment of 'entering', the atmosphere radically changes. The first impulse of Christian initiation transforms into an attraction generated purely by the geometry of the directional-longitudinal space. All these illuminate the significant differences between the geometrical and the spiritual dynamism of the church, a problem that is demonstrated by Rudolf Schwarz's spatial concept quite aptly.

During the 1951 Darmstadt conference titled *Mensch und Raum*, where José Ortega y Gasset and Martin Heidegger were among the invited speakers, Schwarz's position was about the nature of architectural space. According to him, longitudinal space as well as all the other geometrical formations in architecture derive from the corresponding social pattern. "It only emerges if an amount of people stand beside and around each other. (...) This basic but admirable form appears, when people exceed their individual self and devote themselves to the community without reservation. Through their sacrifice they become parts of a quite different world, they are rewarded with a new way of existence while saving their personality as well." (Schwarz, cited in Ferkai, 2003: 199) The premise that "many people *stand* beside and around each other" implies that the congregation may consist of motionless witnesses of the sacred. However, the choir and the ministrants together with the members of the clergy are supposed to be in constant move during a regular service. Immobility may not characterize the whole community, unless it is homogenous regarding the ritual duties, but this would be certainly unacceptable. Testified by the seven ideal plans contained in his book on church

architecture, *Vom Bau der Kirche* (1938), the homogenous understanding of congregation was indeed one of Schwarz's unspoken theoretical start-ups. In his system, which was largely based on Otto Friedrich Bollnow's existential philosophy, 'the spatiality of human life' is conceived as a principle responsible for both memory and cognition, as well as the sense of security in the human mind (Bollnow, 1994: 306-10). Hence it is clear that Schwarz's experience of the sacred involves a stationary spatial presence rather than a dynamically arising presence in action (Földváy, 2003). This experience seeks the light of heavenly permanence which manifests itself in the Eucharistic adoration, and not in the sacrificial act. Believers contemplating the Holy Eucharist attempt to share the silence of the eternal, and transform their surroundings accordingly. The German architect's laconic geometrical modernity, and his approach to the architectural essence, may be understood in this way, for his concept lets the idea of perfection be exchangeable for permanence, tranquillity, or homogeneity: "What comes to life after this is valid as a geometrical form; it is a canon which people made for themselves. That is a luminous and perfectly severe shape: the simpler the form, the more admirable and genial the building." (Schwarz, cited in Ferkai, 2003: 199)

Although the community plays a key role in formularizing basic spatial arrangements, these formulas work in a quite orderly way later on, alike the rites of Quickborn's committed youth. Even the directional-longitudinal space of Fronleichnamkirche (er. 1928-30), a church built for the Aachener Oratorians, is designed in a declaredly contemplative manner, as the answer given to the sceptics opposing the "outrageously «empty» and naked" building makes it clear. Against this critique, "Schwarz pleaded that a plastered surface is not abstract since it starts a dialogue with the community by means of materiality and reflection. The blank wall behind the altar, for instance, may be considered as a screen onto which neither a slide nor a film, but the thoughts of the praying worshippers are projected." (ibid: 200) Unless we doubt that Schwarz's modern Catholic spirituality and unparalleled work is often referred to and considered germane to the field (Zahner, 2009), then all these may depict a more detailed image of an architecture which, unlike the Italian example explained before, has taken the path of puritanism, silence and geometrical unity in search for perfection.

**Figure 6 Álvaro Siza Vieira, St Mary's Church, Marco de Canaveses, Portugal (1990-2007). Aerial view, church interior, and ground plans.**



Besides Siza's church, John Pawson's Nový Dvůr monastery (er. 1999-2004) belongs here as well. The architecture of 'white silence' suits the Trappists quite well, since as a monastic community they try to realize a simulacrum of unworldly existence in human life (Gonchar, 2007). The contemplative space materializes itself in homogeneously diffuse lights, solid surfaces, sound-absorbing walls and exquisite shapes, which dominantly spread out to each segment of the monastery: the cloister, the refectory, the dormitory, the double-storied scriptory upstairs, the chapter room as well as the sacristy. Many of the rooms with traditional functions line up in the new wings which run towards the valley. The wings extend the Baroque manor house into a monastic courtyard, which is the basis of the new building. What they contain give rise to an immaterial sense, however, as the minimalist language is combined with discretely finished details, including architectural gestures towards the community of both monks and the laity. It is worth to mention, for instance, an atrium between the middle block of the former manor house and the new church, accessible through a narrow hatch. The atrium works as a forefront which continues the church's axis and thus invites laypersons to enter the liturgical space. The gate, not taller than the atrium's perimetric walls, is situated at the corner apathetically. Although normally monks advance to the church from the cloister, the outdoor details project the monastic lifestyle to the outsiders visiting the community for contemplative purposes.

The unostentatious architecture, avoiding spectacular emphasis and distinction, is supported by the regulations of St. Bernard of Clairvaux in some measure, although they would not necessarily lead to the unparalleled unity of the liturgical space. As in Aachen, the dark furniture contrasting the white interior seems the only device which defines the church according to its functionality for the lack of further articulations, while windows gently follow its order. The touch of the supersensible also reminds one of Schwarz's church. The German master achieved the same effect with undetailed and unframed quadratic openings, white walls measuring 19 metres vertically, white slab seemingly floating, and finally the contrast between the spotless chain of walls and the black marble floor. Besides the contrast, there is a notably increased verticality in Nový Dvůr thanks to the church's unusual height as well as light sources hidden behind the curtain walls. The geometrical unity is so unbroken there that Pawson used his paragon, most probably Le Thoronet, the Cistercian church in Provence influenced by Benedictine contemporaries, in a special way (Leroux-Dhuys, 1998: 354-61). He redesigned its space by applying a similar floor plan, but chose a continuous flat ceiling instead of the original vaults. It means a change in the traditional spatial concept where the

sanctuary is ordinarily built narrower and lower than the nave. While walls jump in at the entrance of the sanctuary, the slab remains even, and unbroken by a beam in the same line. Height is unvaried, so the possibility of understanding the corners' slight structural change as a reference to chancel arches is remote.

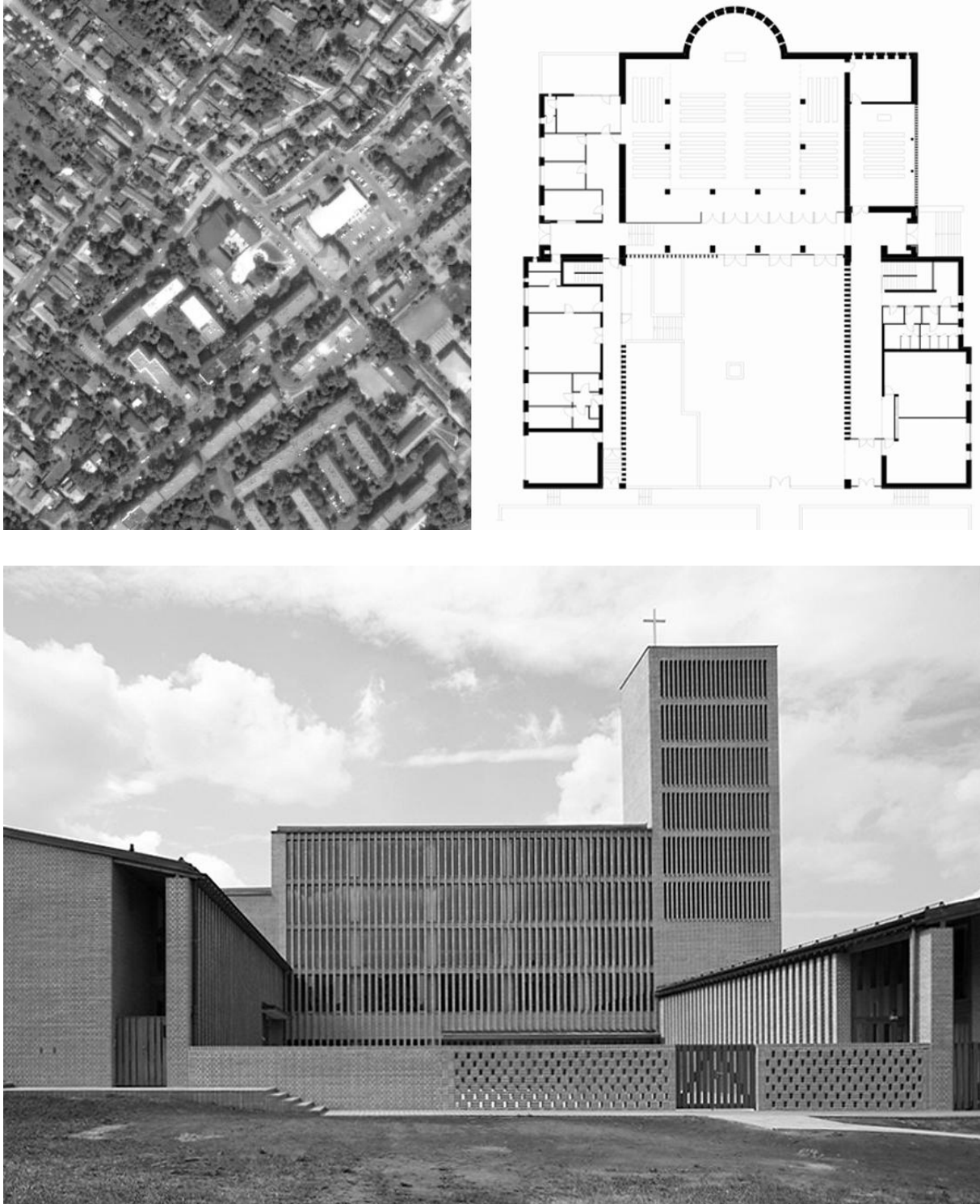
The incisions of windows immediately spring up to the ceiling at the borders of the sanctuary. The vertical rule is affirmed by the staircase leading from the apse to the crypt underneath, which makes the space higher by one third. The pitching field along the church meets the level of the landing, thus we may measure the total height by standing on the actual 'ground'. We could draw a vertical axis connecting the crypt with the ceiling through the altar. The *axis mundi* parallel to the centreline of the apse's semi-cylinder well accentuates the altar, which would almost fade in the homogeneous atmosphere without that axis, but this is a matter of contemplation summarizing visual effects. So could Pawson identify his design with the order's precepts by his architecture. He found the interior's unity so important that he either attached outdoor structures to the volume or, for instance, applied hanging 'vaults' in the cloister.

In its general character, the monastery models the opposite of the parish complex at Casal Boccone, because it focuses on the constant presence, while the Italian example's open and partly profane structure evolves from an ever-renewing genesis or recreation of the sacred. The latter is the vertex of the mass as the Catholic tradition defines: the altar's sacrifice is primer to the presence of the Holy Sacrament. The sacrifice is a temporal action at the first place, and has a spatial extension at the second (Francis, 2013: IV.222-25 /AAS.1111-12). Liturgy is therefore dynamic, temporal, and essentially irreproducible in a sense that it cannot be separated from the uniqueness of Christian palingenesis (Ratzinger, 2000: 94, 164). The following architectural features thus reflect the spirit of the liturgy more successfully:

1. Togetherness of secular and ecclesial functions in urban context,
2. Articulation of architectural details according to the liturgical and communal functionality,
3. Dynamic emphases either plastically or by the variation of textures and colours, which naturally follow an organic and hierarchic arrangement.



**Figure 7 Tamás Nagy, Holy Trinity Church, Gödöllő, Hungary (er. 2001-2007). Aerial view, ground floor's plan and front view.**



Compounds of the two parallel concepts are always questionable, however Trinity Church (er. 2001-2007) [Figure 7], a remarkable masterpiece of the Hungarian architect Tamás Nagy, shows that such a compound is not impossible (Vukoszávlyev, 2011: 58 and 2014: 36-39). The complex parish and community house is situated next to a historically imposing

neighbour, the Castle of Gödöllő, yet its daily life runs its course at the border of a housing estate and a residential area. Its civic role, which would fit with all the other suburban parishes introduced before, is to knit peripheral and socially disorganized communities under the wings of the Church. For the challenge of this task, Nagy responds with a triplex composition showing much confidence and openness to community life. The church's volume surmounts the complex ending in two gable-roofed wings: a two-storey-high parish to the left, and a community house with a gallery to the right. The liturgical building, together with its quasi-symmetrical wings, form a quadratic courtyard or *quadrum*, incomplete at the arrival side, which elongates the *narthex* outdoors. The rhythm of the densely pillared courtyard is continued by the church's façade, which transfigures into an autonomous surface, a collage that abstractly maps the building's structure. By giving an insight to the static frame behind the brick cladding, the wall's light permeable hatching entices visitors to pass the threshold to the interior.

Vertical structure is composed of full length concrete pillars which change the ardent texture of brick with still white. Posts and beams of the natural wooden roof rest upon these pillars, and carry force up from the constant to the less substantial. Timberwork in white bedding is supplemented by limestone floor and the ripe coloured, puritan furniture of the congregation. Despite the embracing gesture of the building, pews are arranged in directional-longitudinal order. With the liturgical space organized according to its shorter axis, there was no need for making a better expression of the community than the building itself. Its solution, therefore, is the same that Casal Boccone provided; however, it is even more consequent regarding the interior's layered fabric. Under the U-shaped gallery, for instance, there is more room for those who want to observe yet not attend holy mass. In the ecumenical age of adult neophytism, there is special need for such spaces, where the assembly can be acquainted with Catholic service and faith (Földváry, 2006: 175-76). The choir floating overhead compasses the church, and so is projecting Rudolf Schwarz's "open ring" scheme onto the axial ground plan from above.

The gallery, which mirrors the building's floor plan quite properly, alleviates any sense of lacking arising from the incompleteness of the courtyard and the front façade. For the second time, its U-shape is mirrored with softer outlines by the apse. The sanctuary with two ambos and the Crucifix beyond the altar pushed to the front fulfils the role of the 'head' among several parts of the 'body' which build up the complex (Eph 1:10, 4:15-16). This is the only

place in the homogeneous architectural frame where the functional variegation of the building is visualized. The entire power and versatility of life taking place here is collected in the altar. This meeting is signified by the apse's 63 windows. The colourful puzzle is the visual translation of a Gregorian version of *Kyrie*, according to the Dutch composer, Alexander Skrjabin. The act of the sanctuary has broken the unaltered peace of the space, as Tamás Nagy's description (cited in Vukoszávlyev, 2009) about the reinterpretation of monastic paragons for secular communities makes it clear. The description gives a summary about an architecture which creatively projects the structure of liturgy out to its environment and moreover its own tectonic frame:

“The three elements of the building complex, namely the church, the parishioner's house and the community wing define a quadratic courtyard. The latter will soon be a garden with trees, flowers, and a well in the middle. They resemble the old monasteries. The formula is from there of course. The difference is that the garden is open at the fourth side, limited by a breached fence merely, and this is an important message to the World: come in, we are open, you can enter. (...) The central space of the church is organized around the sanctuary, which is the nucleus. The gallery's U-shaped space encompasses the sanctuary the same way as three wings of the building bounds the courtyard. The apse differs from all the other spatial elements not just formally, since it is the only one arcuate, but in its colours as well.”

## Summary

According to the experiences of realised buildings introduced by this study, the spatial concept of the 20th century liturgical reform movements have been re-evaluated due to the changing demands of church architecture: longitudinal models with focus points arrange sacred space with more appropriate emphases, better understanding of cultic symbolism and hierarchy. The adequate articulation of the liturgical space, projected to multifunctional church complexes, explains the dynamics of Christian life with greater success. Architectures which authentically reflect the spirit of liturgy show more interest in the sacrificial core of the church, and define community buildings as structural extensions of the sacred. Liturgy is understood as temporal and essentially irreproducible, thus capable of organizing periodic life through its rhythm. This implies the need for togetherness of secular and ecclesial functions in

an urban context, and the articulation of architectural details according to the liturgical and communal needs. Dynamic emphases either plastically or by the variation of textures and colours may oppose the homogeneous or static concepts of space, but follow an organic and hierarchic arrangement which reflects the nature of the Church's body.

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